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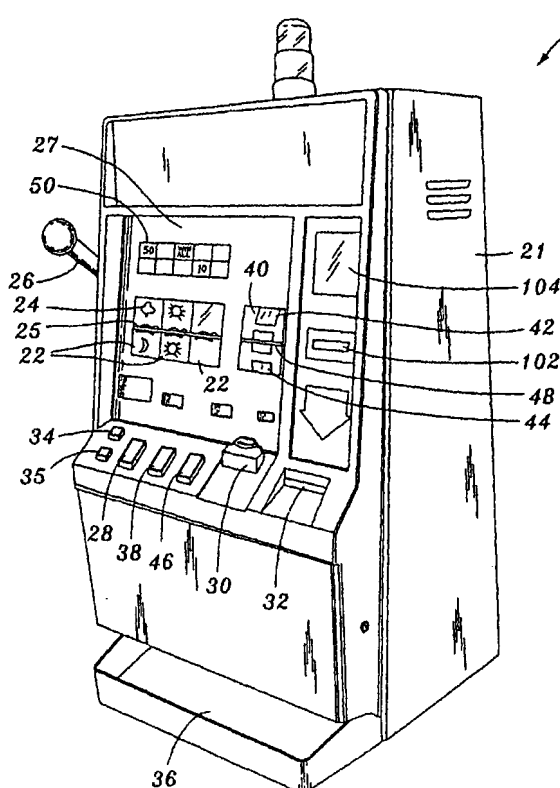
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(54) Title: GAMING DEVICE AND METHOD OF PLAYING A GAME



(57) Abstract: A game having a bonus feature and gaming apparatus (20) is disclosed. One embodiment comprises a player placing a wager (S2), spinning a plurality of first reels (S3) having indicia thereon, determining if indicia displayed by first reels associated with a first pay line comprises a predetermined winning combination, if so, paying a first award (S5), permitting a player to spin the at least one bonus reel (40) or participate in the bonus event, determining if an award associated with the at least one bonus reel is associated with a second pay line (44), if so, paying a bonus award. The gaming device (20) includes three first mechanical or video-generated reels (22) for playing the first game, one second mechanical or video-generated reel (40) for playing the bonus event, mechanisms for accepting wagers, paying winnings, and associating win amounts from the first game with the at least one bonus reel.

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GAMING DEVICE AND METHOD OF PLAYING A GAME

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to games and gaming devices arranged to present games for play.

BACKGROUND ART

5 Gaming is an industry which has grown immensely in the last few decades. This growth has seen gaming spread from just a few locations to many throughout the world, and has resulted in greater numbers of people than ever participating in gaming. Gaming originally comprised just a few "table" games, such as poker, craps and blackjack. Later, machine based games were offered, such as the now common mechanical reel-type slot machine and the video style slot and
10 poker machine.

 One problem facing game manufacturers is the need to continually create new and exciting games to maintain the interest of the public. This is more difficult than it appears at first glance. Of course, to be successful, the new game must appeal to the player to generate a profitable revenue. The gross revenue generated by a game is based on a variety of factors, such
15 the length of time each player plays, the amount wagered, and the average percentage "take" of the game. If the "take" is too high, a player is generally unwilling to play. If the "take" is very low, then it is necessary to ensure that the game is played nearly continuously so that revenue is constantly being derived. When players play a game for only short periods of time, the revenue of the game is generally reduced because of "idle" time between players. The amount
20 wagered also contributes to the revenue. In general, if the amount that a player is willing to bet, either on each game or over time can be increased, then the revenue of the game will generally increase. These and a variety of other factors all contribute to the total revenue produced by a game.

 The ability of a game to generate a profit is dependent not only upon the gross revenue
25 produced by the game, but the cost of producing and operating the game device. A game may be very appealing, but if extremely expensive to produce, its revenue may not exceed its costs. Profitability is thus tied to both the cost of the game and the ability of the game to generate revenue.

 The appeal of a game and the length of time a player will play a game are dependent
30 upon a number of factors. These factors include some of those described above, such as the odds or take, and on a variety of other factors. For example, a game which is very difficult to understand and play will not tend to draw many long-term players. A few players may take to

the game, while most will be alienated and play once or twice. A game which involves little skill may appeal to a wide cross-section of the public because of its ease of play. On the other hand, the length of time a player may play such a game may be fairly short, with the player losing interest unless "luck" is on their side and they see consistent winnings during a session of play.

Thus, it is desirable to produce a game which attracts a wide audience, which keeps the attention of a player for long periods of time, and which causes the player to want to place large wagers.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention comprises a gaming apparatus and a method of playing a game. More specifically, the invention is a game comprising a main game and an associated bonus event.

One or more embodiments of the invention comprise a gaming apparatus. In one embodiment, the gaming apparatus includes a plurality of first or main game reels for displaying indicia. A spin input is provided by which a player is permitted to spin the first reels. A payout mechanism pays the player a winning in the event a predetermined winning combination of indicia are displayed by the plurality of first reels after the spin.

In one embodiment, the gaming apparatus includes at least one additional or bonus reel. The at least one additional reel is adapted to display winning amounts won by the player as a result of playing the game. A spin input is provided by which a player is permitted, at one or more times, to spin the at least one additional reel. The gaming apparatus is arranged to pay the player a winning amount if the result of the spin of the additional, bonus reel comprises a winning outcome.

In one or more embodiments of the invention, one or more of the main game and/or bonus event reels comprise mechanical reels. In other embodiments, one or more of the main game and/or bonus event reels comprise images which are displayed on a display.

One or more embodiments of the invention comprise a method of playing a game. One such method comprises the steps of a player placing a wager, spinning a plurality of first or main game reels having indicia thereon, determining if indicia displayed by the plurality of first reels and associated with a first pay line comprises a predetermined winning combination of indicia, paying a first award if the displayed indicia comprise a predetermined winning combination, associating the first award with at least one additional or bonus reel when a winning combination is received by spinning the first reels, permitting a player to spin the at least one additional reel

at one or more times, and determining if an award associated with the at least one additional reel is associated with a second pay line, and if so, paying a bonus award.

In one or more embodiments of the invention, the step of associating the first award with the at least one additional reel comprises transferring a winning value from the first game and displaying that value on the at least one additional reel.

In one embodiment, a player is permitted to continue to associate first awards with the additional reel until all positions of the additional reel are full, at which time the player must spin the additional reel. In another embodiment, after the additional reel is full, the player is permitted to continue playing and replace lower value first awards on the additional reel with later received higher value first awards.

In one embodiment, a "win all" indicia is associated with the additional reel. A player receiving the "win all" indicia as a result of a spin of the additional reel is entitled to a winning comprising the sum of all first awards displayed by or associated with the additional reel.

In accordance with the invention, a game is provided in which a player is entitled to play for a bonus winning amount simply as a result of playing the game. The player is not required to place an additional bet in order to be entitled to play for the bonus award on the additional reel. Moreover, a player is enticed to play the first game an extended period of time in order to fill the additional reel and improve the odds of winning the bonus game.

In one or more embodiments, the bonus event comprises the spinning of a wheel. In one embodiment, indicia having associated values are associated with the wheel upon winning outcomes of the main game.

In one embodiment, a player is permitted to designate a particular indicia as a "win all" indicia. In the event the outcome of the bonus event comprises the designated indicia, the player is entitled to a win all payout. In one embodiment, a player is awarded a progressive bonus award for receiving a particular bonus event outcome.

In another embodiment, the bonus event comprises a bonus board. A player is awarded a bonus amount for receiving particular combinations of indicia on the bonus board, or by removing indicia from the bonus board. In one embodiment, indicia are added to or removed from the board dependent upon winning outcomes of the main game.

Further objects, features, and advantages of the present invention over the prior art will become apparent from the detailed description of the drawings which follows, when considered with the attached figures.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGURE 1 is illustrates of a gaming apparatus in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

5 FIGURE 2 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of playing a game in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 3(a) illustrates indicia displayed by reels of a game being played in accordance with the invention after a first spin of the main game reels;

10 FIGURE 3(b) illustrates indicia displayed by reels of a game being played in accordance with the invention after another spin of the main game reels, wherein a winning combination was received on the main game reels and an associated winning amount from the first game has been transferred to a bonus reel;

15 FIGURE 3(c) illustrates indicia displayed by reels of a game being played in accordance with the invention after a later spin of the main game reels, wherein another winning combination was received on the main game reels and an associated winning amount from the first game has been transferred to the bonus reel;

FIGURE 3(d) illustrates indicia displayed by reels of a game being played in accordance with the invention after a player has spun the bonus reel and received a bonus win;

FIGURE 4 illustrates a gaming device in accordance with another embodiment of the invention; and

20 FIGURE 5 illustrates yet another gaming device in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

25 The invention is a method of playing a game and one or more apparatus for presenting a game for play. In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a more thorough description of the present invention. It will be apparent, however, to one skilled in the art, that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known features have not been described in detail so as not to obscure the invention.

30 In general, one aspect of the invention is a game having a secondary event or bonus feature. By a "bonus" feature, it is generally meant that by engaging in a first event or activity, a player is presented at one or more times with an opportunity to engage in an additional, second event or activity. In a preferred embodiment, although the game is considered a single game comprising two parts, both activities of the game primarily comprise events of chance. In one

or more embodiments, the bonus event is referred to as a "bonus" event because while the player is required to place a wager to engage in the game, or the first or main activity, the player may participate in the bonus event without placing an additional wager.

Figure 1 illustrates a gaming apparatus 20 arranged to present a such a game in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The apparatus 20 may have a variety of forms and configurations. As illustrated, the apparatus 20 includes a cabinet 21 for housing and supporting the systems and apparatus necessary to present the game to a player.

The apparatus 20 includes means for displaying game indicia. In one or more embodiments, this means comprises a plurality of mechanical reels 22. In a preferred embodiment, the reels 22 are utilized in playing a first or main game or event, and as such are referred to generally herein as "main game" reels.

Such reels 22 are well known, and comprise a body having one or more indicia or symbols 24 printed thereon. In a preferred embodiment, three reels 22 are provided. In one or more embodiments, each reel 22 includes twelve indicia positions or locations. The indicia 24 displayed on a particular reel 22 may comprise twelve different indicia, or include one or more duplicate indicia. In addition, the indicia 24 displayed on the reels 22 may be the same or different. The indicia 24 may comprise numbers, letters, pictures, symbols or the like.

Preferably, one or more combinations of the indicia 24 when displayed simultaneously as a result of a spin of the reels 22 are designated as a winning combination of indicia. The number of winning combinations may vary dependent upon the desired payout or winning percentage to the players as compared to that which is retained by the game operator. In one or more embodiments, at least one of the same indicia 24 is contained on each of the reels 22, and at least one winning combination comprises all of the reels 22 displaying that same indicia. For example, with reference to Figure 1, the at least one indicia 24 which is displayed on each reel 22 comprises an image of a turtle. A winning combination comprises all of the reels 22 displaying the turtle image.

Means are provided for rotating the reels 22. In one or more embodiments, the means may comprise a mechanical linkage associated with a spin arm 26, with movement of the spin arm (a "pull") by a user causing the reels 22 to spin. In such an arrangement, the reels 22 are generally allowed to free-wheel and then stop.

In another embodiment, electronically controlled mechanisms are arranged to rotate and stop each reel 22. Such mechanisms are well known to those of skill in the art. In this arrangement, actuation of the spin arm 26 or depression a spin button 28 causes a controller (not

shown) to signal the activation of the spin mechanism associated with one or more of the reels 22. Preferably, the controller is arranged to either turn off the signal to the device(s) effecting the rotation of each or all of the reels 22, or generates a signal for activating a braking device, whereby the reels 22 are stopped. As is well known, the combinations of reel positions and their odds of hitting are associated with the controller, and the controller is arranged to stop the reels 22 in a position displaying a combination of indicia as determined by the controller based on the combinations and odds. The principal of such an arrangement is described in U.S. Patent No. 4,448,419 to Telnaes, which is incorporated herein by reference.

In a preferred embodiment, each reel 22 is positioned behind a screening glass or panel 27. The panel 27 includes at least one area through which each of the reels 22, and thus the indicia 24 thereon, may be viewed. In order to aid the player in determining which indicia 24 displayed by the reels 22 comprises the indicia which are evaluated for determining if a winning combination has been received, a pay line 25 is provided. The pay line 25 comprises a line or bar which extends over the reels 22. As illustrated, the pay line 25 comprises a line printed on the screening glass aligned over a central portion of each reel 22. When the reels 22 stop rotating, the indicia 24 on each reel 22 which the pay line 25 extends over or intersects comprise the indicia 24 which are evaluated for determining if a winning combination has been received.

Of course, the pay line may be imaginary, and a winning combination determined by the controller or the position of the reels.

The gaming apparatus 20 includes a mechanism for accepting a wager. As illustrated, a coin accepting mechanism 30 is provided for accepting coins. A bill acceptor 32 is provided for accepting bills. Other mechanisms may be provided for accepting a wager, such as card or ticket readers or input devices whereby a player may have funds paid from a remote account. A "play credit" 34 button and a "bet max" button 35 may also be provided for permitting a player to place wagers from a pool of credits won or paid by the player. The gaming apparatus 20 may be adapted to accept a variety of coins, such as dimes, quarters or silver dollars. In one or more embodiments, playing a single credit comprises playing an amount of one of the accepted coins, and playing a maximum bet comprises playing or betting an amount comprising a multiple of the value of a single of the accepted coins.

The gaming apparatus 20 includes a means for paying a player winnings. When a player wins a game, the player is preferably paid in the form of stored credits, the amount of which is indicated to the player. A "cash out" button 38 is preferably provided for permitting a player to be paid the winnings or any paid in credits. In one embodiment, the means for paying a player

comprises a coin dispenser (not shown) for dispensing coins to a coin tray 36. A player may also be permitted to be paid their credits or winnings on a player card (as described below) in electronic form.

As described above, the gaming apparatus 20 preferably includes a controller (not shown) for controlling the game, including receiving player input and sending output signals for controlling the various components of the apparatus 20. The controller may be arranged to receive input in the form of a "spin" signal from a spin button or the spin arm 26 (or other spin input), a bet credit signal when the bet credit button 34 is depressed, and a credits insert signal when a player inserts bills or coins. The controller may be arranged to send signals for stopping the reels 22, for causing the coin dispenser to pay winnings, and cause a display to display winning amount information. In addition, the controller is preferably arranged to determine if a spin of the main game reels 22 has resulted in a win, and if so, the amount to be payed to the player for that win.

The number of winning combinations, the odds of receiving a winning combination and the payout for each winning combination may vary, as is well known in the art. If the reels are purely mechanical, the odds of winning are based on the number of indicia, the number of reels, and the number of predetermined winning combinations. As described above, when a mechanism is employed for stopping the reels 22 in predetermined positions, the controller may be programmed to present desired odds. It will also be appreciated that a player may be paid more for a winning combination when the player places a larger wager. In this regard, the player may be presented with a pay table which indicates the payout for each winning combination based on the wager placed by the player.

The controller may comprise one or more than one element, and may comprise hardware and/or software, such as code executable by a processor. The code may be stored on an appropriate data storage device, such as a hard drive or memory chip, or be integrated into a micro-processor chip. The controller may be part of an integrated system, or be self-contained. The arrangements of such a controller and the principles of odds, payouts and the like are well known to those of skill in the art.

In accordance with an embodiment of the invention, the gaming apparatus 20 is arranged to present a player with an additional or bonus game or event associated with the first event or main game described above. In one or more embodiments, a player is permitted to participate in the bonus event or game at any time, without regarding to the outcome of the first game or event. In one embodiment, however, the outcome of the first game or event changes a state of

the bonus event, such as a payout associated therewith. In one or more other embodiments, the player is presented with the opportunity to participate in a bonus or additional event upon the occurrence of one or more events related to the main game, without being required to place an additional wager, and with the opportunity to win an additional payout separate from any payout awarded by playing the main game. As described below, this second event is referred to as a bonus or additional feature. The event is referred to as a "bonus" event because the player is at one or more times, simply by having played the first or main game or having placed an main bet, provided the opportunity to win bonus event winnings or additional winnings without being required to place an additional bet

In one or more embodiments, one or more bonus, additional or second reels are provided. Preferably, the one or more additional reels comprise a single, fourth, bonus reel 40. The bonus reel 40 is arranged to display indicia associated with a bonus feature of a game played on the apparatus 20. In a preferred embodiment, the bonus reel 40 is capable of displaying twelve of the same or different indicia 42, and thus has twelve positions or locations.

In a preferred embodiment, the bonus reel 40 is capable of displaying indicia 42 comprising winning amounts or payouts received by a player when playing the first or main game using the main game reels 22. In one or more embodiments, such indicia 42 comprise numeric payout amounts, such as paid credit or winning values. These values are dependent upon the winnings paid in accordance with the play of the main game reels 22. One of the indicia 42 preferably comprises a "win all" indicia 44. In other words, in a preferred embodiment, the bonus reel 40 is capable of displaying twelve (12) indicia 42 including the "win all" indicia 44, i.e. eleven (11) indicia plus the "win all" indicia, and thus includes eleven (11) locations for indicia comprising amounts paid the player for receiving winning combinations when playing the main game. In one or more other embodiments, the "win all" indicia 44 is not included, or other indicia are included which are associated with the bonus reel 40 but not with the main game.

In accordance with an embodiment of the apparatus 20, the player is permitted to, at one or more times, spin the bonus reel 40. Preferably, a separate bonus reel "spin" button 46 or other spin input is provided for this purpose. When the bonus reel spin button 46 is depressed, the bonus reel 40 is caused to spin and then stop, displaying either a blank or unfilled position, or one of the indicia 42 thereon. Preferably, as with the main game reels 22, a pay line 48 is provided for indicating whether an indicia displayed by the bonus reel 40 is a winning indicia. As stated below, the player may be permitted to participate in the bonus event, such as by

spinning the bonus reel 40, at any time at least an ante or bet is placed. In one or more other embodiments, the player may be permitted to participate in the bonus event only after one or more values have been associated with the bonus reel 40 or other bonus event as a result of one or more outcomes of the main game.

5 Means are provided for causing the bonus reel 40 to display winnings paid as a result of play of the main game. In one embodiment, the bonus reel 40 comprises a mechanical reel which is arranged to rotate. Display means are associated with the bonus reel 40 for displaying the indicia 42. In one or more embodiments, LEDs are associated with the bonus reel 40 for displaying the indicia 42. In other embodiments, one or more lasers may be arranged to display
10 images on the reel 40, or the reel 40 may include one or more LCDs or other display devices. Such display devices are arranged so that the bonus reel 40 may still rotate, but the indicia associated therewith may be changed to reflect winning values from the main game, which values may change over time.

In accordance with the invention, LEDs may be arranged to project indicia images onto
15 the bonus reel 40 from behind. A control is provided for selectively activating the LEDs to generate differing images. In one or more embodiments, as described below, the indicia 42 may comprise credit values such as the numbers 10, 20 or the like, and the LEDs may then be arranged to project images of such values. In another embodiment, the reel 40, wheel or other feature may be illustrated with a hologram or similar projected element.

20 The bonus reel 40 need not actually display each and every indicia 42 which is associated with it. For example, in an embodiment where the bonus reel 40 is mechanical, only the reel locations facing the player and which are visible need to be capable of displaying indicia. In this arrangement, a large number of indicia 42 may be associated with the bonus reel 40, but only a few of these indicia may be displayed at any given time. Of course, the same is true in that
25 instance where, as described below, the bonus reel 40 comprises a computer generated image.

Those of skill in the art will appreciate that the main game reels 22 and/or the bonus reel 40 may instead comprise one or more electronic displays for displaying information such as the indicia 24,42. For example, in one or more embodiments, an LCD screen may be arranged to display an image comprising the main game reels 22 and the indicia 24 associated therewith, and
30 the bonus reel 40 and the indicia 42 associated therewith.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the main game reels 22 comprise rotating mechanical elements, and the bonus reel 40 comprises an electronically displayed image. In such event, the controller for causing the different indicia 42 to be display on the bonus reel 40

comprises a video controller causing the different images to be displayed by the video screen. The video controller may be arranged to cause the image of a "rotating" mechanical reel to be displayed to simulate rotation of a physical reel.

As described above, a variety of the player input devices or controls comprise physical electro-mechanical buttons. In place of, or in addition to such controls, one or more touch-screen or touch-sensitive displays may be provided. Such screen(s) may be arranged to display information to a player and accept input from the player. For example, the screen may display a "spin" button area which when touched by the player serves to provide a "spin" signal to the controller.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the main game reels 22 comprise mechanical reels which are activated by either the spin arm 26 or a spin button comprising a touch screen button. The bonus reel 40 comprises a video simulated reel which is activated by a touch screen button as well.

In one or more embodiments of the invention, there may be fewer than three or greater than three main or first reels 22. Further, as described above, the number of indicia associated with the reels 22 may vary. There may be more than one additional second or bonus reel 40 as well. For example, two bonus reels may be provided, and winning amounts from the first game may be associated with one or both of the bonus reels. The player may then only receive a bonus winning if the resultant spin of both bonus reels comprises a winning combination. In another embodiment, one of the bonus reels may display other indicia, such as multipliers. Upon a spin of the bonus reels, a player may receive a winning amount based on the outcome of a first of the bonus reels, which amount may be increased by a multiplier depending on the outcome of the spin of the bonus of the bonus reels. There are a wide variety of combinations of such additional reels. In one embodiment, a player may be permitted to spin one of the bonus reels without paying an additional wager, but may be required to place an additional wager in order to spin a multiplier bonus reel or the like.

In one or more embodiments of the invention, the main game may comprise other than a "slot"-type game as described above. For example, the first or main game may comprise video poker or a game in which the player plays the house, such as "21." When the player wins the game, as determined by the criteria for that game, then the player is paid a winning amount. This amount is then associated with the second or bonus event, as described above.

In one or more embodiments, the amounts which are associated with the bonus game need not comprise the actual winning amount(s) from the main game. For example, the amounts

associated with the bonus game may comprise a fraction of the winning amount from the main game, such as $\frac{1}{2}$, or may comprise a multiple of the winning amount from the main game, such as 2X, 5X, 10X or the like. In one or more other embodiments, for each win of the main game, an amount may be randomly selected for association with the bonus game. For example, one
5 winning amount from the group comprising 5 credits, 10 credits and 20 credits may be assigned to the bonus event when a player wins the main game.

In one or more embodiments, the amounts which are associated with the bonus event need not be displayed immediately to the player. For example, in one embodiment, when a player receives a winning combination on the main game reels 22, the winning indicia may be
10 displayed on the bonus reel 40 without value amounts. In one embodiment, only the indicia 42 are displayed on the bonus reel 24, with no bonus amounts. In one embodiment, the indicia 42 may "explode" or otherwise be transformed to display the amount associated with the bonus reel 40 shortly after being associated with the reel 40. In another embodiment, amounts associated with an indicia 42 are only displayed after a spin of the bonus reel 40.

As stated above, in one embodiment, the "win all" amount may comprise the sum of all amounts associated with every indicia 42 associated with the bonus reel 40. In one or more
15 embodiments, the amount paid to a player for hitting the "win all" indicia 44 on the bonus reel 40 may comprise a jackpot award. In a preferred embodiment, the jackpot award may comprise a progressive award. For example, a percentage of the amounts wagered by players playing the device 20 may be set aside into a progressive pot. This pot grows until a player hits the "win all"
20 indicia 44 on the bonus reel 40, at which point the amount associated with the progressive pot is awarded to the player. As will be appreciated, the progressive award may be much larger than the sums of all of the amounts associated with the other indicia 42 associated with the bonus reel 40. In one embodiment, a plurality of the devices 20 may be linked to one another to provide
25 a multi-device progressive, where the pot comprises the aggregate of the reserved sums from all of the devices 20. In this manner, the progressive award may be larger than could be achieved by a single of the devices.

In one embodiment, a player is awarded the aggregate amounts associated with the indicia 42 when the player receives a win all on the bonus reel 40, unless a progressive amount
30 is larger than that aggregate amount. In the event the progressive amount is larger than the aggregate amount, then the player may be awarded the progressive amount. In this manner, a player is enticed to play regardless of the present value of the progressive amount. If the progressive has just been awarded and is low, then the player attempts to associate large amounts

with the bonus reel 40 to win a large aggregate award. If the progressive amount is larger, then the player is enticed to play for the progressive. In one embodiment, the progressive amount may be pre-set to never fall below a predetermined amount. In one or more embodiments, the winnings paid to a player may comprise other than money. For example, a player may win gifts, such as goods or services. In that event, words or symbols identifying the win may be associated with the bonus reel 40. The gaming apparatus 20 may be arranged to print a ticket by which the player redeems their winnings instead of dispensing the winnings directly.

The bonus event or game need not have the exact format as described above. For example, in one or more embodiments, as illustrated in Figure 4 and described below, the bonus event may comprise a Roulette-wheel type game in which the numbers associated with the wheel comprise winning amounts associated with the wheel when won playing the main game.

In accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention, the gaming apparatus 20 may be linked to a central computer or comprise a part of a system. In one embodiment, a plurality of the gaming apparatus 20 are associated with a gaming system. The system may include one or more central computers which receive data from the apparatus 20 and which send data to each apparatus 20.

In one or more embodiments of the invention, the gaming apparatus 20 may be provided with a player card 100. The card 100 may have a variety of features. In one or more embodiments, the card 100 may comprise a player tracking card as is known in the art. In this regard, the card 100 may be used to store player identification information or an identification code associated with player information stored elsewhere. For example, a gaming establishment may reward players for their play and continued play over time. When the player begins playing a game in accordance with the invention, the player may insert their card 100 into a card reader 102 or similar device associated with the gaming apparatus 102. The information associated with the card 100 is transferred to the game system for use by the gaming establishment. In addition, the information may be transferred to the card 100 and stored thereon. The gaming establishment may provide awards, such as food or money, to reward a player for their play. The awards may be based upon a number of points generated by a player associated with their play, such as the length of time of play. The gaming establishment may update the points awarded to a player at the end of each gaming session in which the player participates.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the card 100 has information associated therewith which causes the gaming apparatus 20 to specially configure itself for a particular player. In one or more embodiments, the card 100 has information associated therewith which

comprises a language code which is utilized by the gaming apparatus 20 to specifically configure the game presented. In a preferred embodiment, the language code is utilized to cause the gaming machine 20 to display information in a particular language.

5 In one or more embodiments, a number of language codes are provided, each code associated with a particular language, such as English, Spanish, German or the like. When the code is read by the gaming apparatus 20, the apparatus 20 is arranged to display certain information in the particular language associated with the code. The information which is displayed in the language may vary. In one embodiment, the gaming apparatus 20 includes a display 104 which displays instructions, game status and other information to the player. The
10 information which is displayed by this display 104 may be displayed in the particular language associated with the code.

Of course, other information may also be displayed in accordance with the particular code. For example, a changeable display may be associated with one or more of the buttons such as the bet credit button 34 or the bet max button 35, the information displayed on which is
15 changed dependent upon the code. The indicia which are displayed by the reels may also be changed.

In one or more embodiments, the card 100 comprises substrate of plastic or similar material having a magnetic stripe for storing information. Of course, a variety of media may be used to store the information. The card 100 may have information printed, encoded or otherwise
20 associated therewith. In addition, it is not necessary that a card be used. An encoded chip, or a token, paper slip, pass, or other media may be used.

In one or more other embodiments, a particular language code is not associated directly with the media, such as the card 100, but is instead stored at the gaming apparatus 20 or a computer or similar device which the apparatus 20 is in communication with. For example, a
25 player identifier may be stored on the card 100, and a data file may be stored on a central computer which corresponds to that player identifier. That data file may contain a particular language code. When the player inserts their card, the gaming device 20 may utilize the player identification information to access the language code for that player from the database. In this arrangement, the means by which a player identifies themselves need not comprise an
30 independent media, but may comprise a biometric identifier. Such may comprise fingerprints, retinal images or the like.

In one or more embodiments, the gaming apparatus 20 is adapted to specially configure itself in other than, or in addition to, just changing the language of displayed information. For

example, the gaming apparatus 20 may be adapted to accept foreign money and provide monetary conversion information to the player.

As described above, the gaming apparatus 20 includes a card acceptor 102. The card acceptor 102 comprises a card reader for reading information from the card. The particular means for reading the information may vary dependent upon the manner by which the information is associated with the card. For example, a magnetic stripe reader is used to read information from a magnetic stripe. An optical reader may be used to read printed information. Retinal and fingerprint scanners are used to image retinas and fingerprints. In one or more embodiments, the gaming apparatus 20 may include more than one type of reading device.

Play of a game in accordance with the present invention will now be described. In one or more embodiments, the game is presented for play on an apparatus 20 such as that illustrated in Figure 1, and reference is made herein to such an apparatus. Of course, a game played in accordance with the invention may be presented on a wide variety of gaming devices other than that specifically illustrated and described herein.

Referring to Figure 2, in a preferred embodiment of the invention, in a first step S1, a player provides monetary input, such as by inserting coins to the coin acceptor 30, bills to the bill acceptor 32, or the like. Next, in a step S2, the player places a wager or bet. In one or more embodiments, this may be accomplished by the player depressing one or more times the bet credit button 34, or pressing the bet max button 35.

In a step S3, the player is permitted to spin the main game reels 22. In one embodiment, when the player depresses the "spin" button 28 or pulls the spin arm 26, the reels 22 are caused to spin, as described above. The reels 22 then stop (or are caused to stop), with each reel displaying an indicia 22 associated with the pay line 25. It is noted that the term "spin" as used herein is not limited to actual rotation of the reels. For example, a "spin" may result when a controller is caused to display a reel and indicia associated therewith on a display. In general, the term "spin" simply means a triggering event for causing the indicia to be randomly presented.

In a step S4, it is determined if the main game reels 22 display a winning combination of indicia 22. As described above, such comprises comparing the indicia 22 which are associated with the pay line 25 with predetermined winning combinations of indicia.

If the player has received a winning combination, then in a step S5, the player is paid the winnings. The payout may be paid in coins, such as through the coin tray 36, or as credits which

the player may then bet using the bet credits and bet max buttons 34,35 or which the player may elect to have paid by pressing the cash out button 38.

5 In a step S6, it is determined if all of the positions associated with the bonus reel 40 for displaying indicia 42 are full. If not, then in a step S7, the amount won or paid to the player for receiving a winning combination on the main game reels 22 is associated with the bonus reel 40. As described above, there are a variety of means by which such indicia may be displayed by the reel 40. In one or more embodiments, in this step the bonus reel 40 is rotated to a position in which it displays a location not yet occupied by an indicia 42, and then the new indicia 42 is displayed thereon. In this manner, the player is permitted to view the addition of the newest
10 winning amount to the bonus reel 40. As described above, the displaying of the indicia 42 may be associated with a mechanical reel or simply a video display of a reel.

If in step S6 all of the positions for indicia 42 associated with the bonus reel 40 are full, then it is determined in a step S8 if the amount won or paid to the player is greater than any of the values already associated with the bonus reel 40. For example, if the player just won 50
15 credits and one of the indicia 42 associated with the bonus reel 40 was 25 credits, then the answer to this inquiry would be yes. If the new amount exceeds any amount currently associated with the bonus reel 40, then in step S7, the new amount is added to the reel 40. More particularly, the new amount is used to replace any one indicia 42 associated with the bonus reel 40 which is less than the new amount. Again, the reel 40 may be rotated to the position of the
20 indicia 42 which is to be replaced, and then be replaced in a manner permitting the player to view the replacement.

In a preferred embodiment, the player may be permitted to select the position on the bonus reel 40 which the player would like to associated an award with. For example, the player may be permitted, after winning the main game, to rotate the bonus reel 40 with a selector to any
25 one of the positions which are unfilled on the bonus reel 40. The player may then press an "enter" or similar button or provide other input which causes the award value from the main game to be associated with that particular position on the bonus reel 40. While such does not allow the player to change the real odds of the bonus event, it permits the player to have more perceived control over the bonus event. In a preferred embodiment, a bonus display 50 is
30 provided which is capable of displaying each of the positions of the bonus reel 40. The bonus display 50 displays a duplicate of each position of the bonus reel 40 and any indicia associated with those positions. In this manner, a player can readily identify how many of the positions of

the bonus reel 40 are filled, and with what award values. This display 50 may be of a variety of types, such as an LCD display.

5 In one embodiment, the display 50 may be integrated into and comprise a portion of the bonus reel 40. For example, in an arrangement where the bonus reel 40 is presented by a video display, when the bonus reel 40 is not being spun, each of the positions of the reel 40 may be displayed in similar fashion to that of display 50. In one embodiment, the positions are all illustrated in a vertical column. Of course, any indicia associated with a position is also illustrated. When the player wishes to spin the bonus reel 40, the column of displayed positions are transformed (by video transformation) into a displayed spinning reel. In this fashion, the
10 player sees all of the positions of the reel and associated indicia during play of the main game, but when play of the bonus event occurs, the player views a reel.

In step S8 if the new winning amount is not greater than any current amount associated with the bonus reel 40, then the amounts associated with the reel are not changed. Information to this effect may be displayed to the player, such as "Bonus Reel Full of Higher Amounts. Do
15 you Wish to Spin?" In such event, or after an indicia 42 is associated with the bonus reel 40 in step S7, it is determined in a step S9 if the player wishes to spin the bonus reel 40. In the arrangement of the apparatus 20 illustrated in Figure 1, such may be indicated by the player pressing the spin bonus reel button 46.

If the player does not wish to spin the bonus reel 40, then the game sequence returns to
20 step S2, with the player being required to place a bet to continue the game. If the player wishes to spin the bonus reel 40, then in a step S10, the bonus reel 40 spins.

In a step S11, it is then determined if the player has received a winning event based on the spin of the bonus reel 40. In a preferred embodiment, the player is declared the winner if the player receives any indicia 42, including the "win all" indicia 44. As described above, a winning
25 indicia may be indicated when an indicia 42 is aligned with the pay line 48. Of course, the bonus reel 40 may stop at a location associated with the pay line 48 which is not occupied or filled with an indicia 42. In such event, the player is not a winner of the bonus game.

In a step S12, if the player wins the bonus game, then the player is paid the winnings. In one or more embodiments, the winnings comprise the amount associated with the bonus reel
30 40 which was aligned with the pay line 48. As described above, these amounts preferably comprise previous winning amounts from the main game. In addition, the player may win the "win all" amount, in which case the player is paid the total of all of the indicia 42 associated with

the bonus reel 40. In this step, the player may be paid the winnings in coins, credits or by other means known in the art.

Whether or not the player won or lost the bonus game, in a step S13, the indicia 42 associated with the reel 40 are removed (i.e. disassociated) therefrom. In a preferred embodiment, the “win all” indicia 44 is retained on the reel 40 at all times, however, since without any other indicia associated with the bonus reel 40, the “win all” would comprise no win.

Referring again now to step S4, if the player was not a winner of the main game, then in a step S14 it is determined if any of the locations on the bonus reel 40 are filled with indicia 42 other than the “win all” indicia 44. In other words, it is determined if the present or a previous player at some point won the main game. If not, then the player is prompted to bet one or more credits to play the main game in order to continue, returning to step S2. If so, then the player is entitled to try and win the bonus game by spinning the bonus reel 40 in step S9. In such event, play continues as described above.

In another preferred embodiment of the invention, a player is permitted to spin the bonus reel 40 at any time. In other words, the game and method are arranged so that the player may participate in the bonus event or spin the bonus reel 40 regardless of the outcome of the main game. In a preferred embodiment, however, bonus win values are not associated with the bonus event or bonus reel 40 unless a particular outcome is achieved as a result of playing the main game. Thus, in one embodiment, when a player first plays the game the bonus reel 40 may have no values associated with it. Nonetheless, the player is permitted spin the bonus reel 40. In another embodiment, one or more values may be pre-associated with the bonus reel 40 and once the player has placed a bet, the player may immediately spin the bonus reel 40. In such event, the method of play is modified from that illustrated in Figure 1 to include a step S1.5 between step S1 and S2 linking to step S9 where it is determined if the player wishes to spin the bonus reel, and wherein step S14 is at least optionally omitted, permitting the player to spin the bonus reel 40 after a spin of the first reels, regardless of whether the bonus reel has any positions filled.

An example of the play of a game in accordance with the above-method will now be described with reference to Figures 3(a)-(d). First, a player inserts money for playing the game. In one embodiment, the player is then permitted to either spin the bonus reel or the main game reels. If the bonus reel is empty, it is presumed that the player will likely elect to spin the main game reels 22. Presume that the player receives the combination of indicia comprising the symbols of a star, moon, and sun (see Figure 3(a)) and this is a non-winning combination. The

player is declared a loser and it is next determined if the player is entitled to play the bonus game. In one embodiment, the player is automatically entitled to play the bonus game. In another embodiment, since the player has not yet won the main game, unless one or more indicia 42 are associated with the bonus reel 40 from a prior game to played by another player, then the player is not permitted to play the bonus game. Presuming that one or more indicia/values are associated with the bonus reel 40 (for example, if the previous player of the apparatus spun the bonus reel on their last play, then all of the indicia would have been removed from the bonus reel 40 in step S13 and the bonus reel is empty except for the "win all" indicia 44, as illustrated in Figure 3(a)), then the player must place another bet to continue.

Presume that in the next spin the player received the combination of three stars on the main game reels 22, and that this combination entitled the player to a winning of 10 credits, as illustrated in Figure 3(b). The player is paid this amount and then the value "10" is associated with one of the locations or positions on the bonus reel 40. Next, the player is entitled to spin the bonus reel 40. The player elects not to, but instead elects to continue to play the main game.

Presume the player plays the game until he has received additional wins from the main game of 20 and 50 credits and these values have also been associated with the bonus reel 40, as illustrated in Figure 3(c). Next assume that the player wishes to spin the bonus reel 40. At this time, the player has the opportunity of receiving no win, a win of 10, 20 or 50 credits, or a "win all," which comprises the total of all the values on the reel 40—in this case $10 + 20 + 50 = 80$. Based on the outcome of the spin, as illustrated in Figure 3(d), the player received a bonus win of 50 credits. The player is either not declared a winner or is a winner and paid the winning amount. As illustrated in Figure 3(d), the player received a bonus win of 50 credits.

In one or more embodiments, when all of the positions on the bonus reel 40 are full, then no other amounts are associated with the reel (i.e. lower amounts are not replaced with higher amounts). In another embodiment, when all of the positions on the bonus reel 40 are full, then future winning amounts from the first game are used to randomly replace indicia already associated with the bonus reel 40.

Several aspects of the game of the present invention will now be appreciated. First, the invention is a game which has two primary components, a first main game or event and a additional, separate bonus event. Unlike prior games, however, in accordance with the invention, a player is automatically permitted to participate in the bonus event, but the events are linked in a preferred embodiment in that by receiving any winning combination of the main game, the payout values of the bonus game are changed.

As will be appreciated, if the player elects to spin the bonus reel 40 when no indicia 42 are associated with the reel 40, then player has no chance of winning the bonus event. Likewise, if the player elects to spin the bonus reel 40 when only a single indicia 42 or few indicia besides the win all indicia 44 is associated with the reel 40, then the player has only a low probability of winning the bonus game. In an example where the odds are true and the reel 40 has twelve locations, in the above-example the player's odds of winning would be two in twelve. As one aspect of the game of the invention, a player is enticed to play the main game a long period of time in an attempt to win it as many times as necessary to completely fill the bonus reel 40. Once the player has filled the bonus reel 40, then the player is assured that a spin of that reel 40 will result in a win of some amount.

Moreover, a player is enticed to play the main game in an attempt to not only fill the bonus reel 40, but to fill it with high winning amounts or payouts. As described above, once the bonus reel 40 is full, if the player continues to play the main game and obtains winning payouts, those payouts are compared to the values already on the bonus reel 40. If the later won amounts from the main game exceed the previous amounts, they are replaced. Thus, the player has the opportunity to play the main game to fill the bonus reel 40 with high winning values. Then, when the player plays the bonus event, that player has the opportunity to win much higher amounts.

As another aspect of the invention, a player may play the bonus event at any time, regardless of a winning outcome of the main game or the number of wins achieved by playing the main game. Thus, if a player does not have sufficient time to play the main game to fill the bonus reel 40, the player may still at any time attempt to win the bonus event by spinning the reel 40. For example, a player may play the main game a short period of time before a table becomes available at a restaurant. When the player's table becomes available, the player need not simply leave his efforts, but can spin the bonus reel 40 and attempt to win whatever amounts the player had been able to place thereon by playing the main game.

In one or more embodiments, a player may be permitted to save a game state associated with the gaming apparatus 20. The player may play the game for some period of time, for example filling several of the spots on the bonus reel 40. The player may not desire to play the bonus game at that time, but may not have time to continue playing the main game in an attempt to fill the bonus reel 40. In a preferred embodiment, the player may be provided with a media having game state information associated therewith. As in the case of the player card 100 described above, the game state information may actually comprise game state data, or may

comprise information for identifying game state information stored elsewhere, such as on a gaming apparatus or central computer. The stored game state information comprises that information which, when the player re-identifies themselves, such as with a card or code, the gaming apparatus 20 configures itself to the state of the game when the player previously quit playing.

Various other embodiments of the present invention will be described with reference to Figure 4. This embodiment device 120 is similar to the device 20 described above, the device 120 again including multiple main game reels 122. The main game reels 122 are arranged to display one or more indicia 124. A pay line 125 is provided for determining which displayed indicia 124 comprise the outcome of the spin. A bonus reel is provided in the form of a bonus wheel 140. The wheel 140 is capable of displaying a plurality of indicia 142, including a "win all" indicia 144. A marker 148 is provided for determining which portion of the wheel 140 comprises the outcome of a spin of the wheel 140.

In one embodiment of the invention, the device 120 includes a display 150 for displaying one or more of the indicia 124 used to play the game. In a preferred embodiment, these indicia 124 comprise symbols representing the twelve astrological signs.

In accordance with one embodiment of a game of the invention using such a device 120, a player is permitted to pick or select a particular indicia 124 which will comprise a "win all" indicia 144 when associated with the bonus wheel 140. In a preferred embodiment, the player selects a particular indicia 124 by pressing an area of the display 150 which is displaying the indicia. Of course, other means may be provided for permitting the player to input their selection. This selected indicia then comprises an indicia which, when placed on the bonus wheel 140, comprises the "win all" indicia 144 and entitles the player to the win all amount if received as the outcome of the bonus event.

Play of the game proceeds in the same manner as described above, with the player placing a bet and then playing the main game reels 122. In accordance with this embodiment of the invention, in the event a specific combination of indicia 124 is received, the player-selected indicia 124 is moved to the bonus wheel 140 and comprises the "win all" indicia 144. For example, the player-selected indicia 124 may be moved to the bonus wheel 140 in the event all of the main game reels 122 display the indicia 124. Of course, other of the indicia 124 may be moved to the bonus wheel 140 based on the outcome of the main game as well. In the event the player-selected indicia 124 is moved to the bonus wheel 140, however, that indicia becomes

the “win all” indicia 142. If the player obtains the right to spin the bonus wheel 140 and it hits this selected “win all” indicia 144, then the player is entitled to a win all payout.

For example, a player may select the indicia 124 representing the astrological sign “Libra.” In the event the player obtains a result of a spin of the main game reels 122 comprising
5 at least a pair of “Libra” signs, then that indicia may be associated with the bonus wheel 140. Upon a spin of the bonus wheel, if the player hits the “Libra” indicia 144, then the player is paid a win all payout.

In this embodiment it is preferred that the bonus wheel 140 initially not have any indicia 142/144 associated with it, or at least no other “win all” indicia. In another embodiment, the
10 bonus wheel 140 may still include another “win all” indicia.

In one or more embodiments, the bonus wheel 140 may be pre-filled with indicia 142. At the beginning of a game, the player may select a particular indicia 142 which will comprise the “win all” or other special winning event indicia 144. The displayed indicia 142 may be
“activated,” such as by having amounts associated therewith, based on winning outcomes of the
15 main game. Upon receiving one or more particular outcomes of the main game, the indicia selected by the player may be activated, entitling the player to a “win all” (or other) payout if this indicia comprises the outcome of the bonus event.

In one embodiment, the indicia selected by the player need not comprise a “win all” indicia when moved to the bonus wheel 140. Instead, the indicia may be associated with
20 another special or different winning or payout if received by the player. For example, a player may receive a payout of 100 coins for receiving three of the selected indicia on the main game reels 122. Then, for receiving the selected indicia upon spinning the bonus wheel 140, the player may receive 500 coins.

Of course, as with the prior embodiments of the invention, in this embodiment the indicia
25 124 may comprise a wide variety of symbols, words or the like. Further, this embodiment of the invention may be implemented on a device 20 such as described above where the bonus event comprises a reel. The game described above in conjunction with the first embodiment may alternatively be presented as including a wheel as illustrated in Figure 4, instead of a reel.

In one embodiment, the wheel 140 may comprise a mechanical element which is
30 rotatable. In another embodiment, the wheel 140 comprises a displayed element. Upon a spin event, appropriate graphics may be used to simulate a rotating wheel 140. The marker 148, which may be a physical element or may be a displayed element, is useful in showing which portion of the wheel 140 comprises the outcome of the spin. In another embodiment, the wheel

140 may be displayed stationary and the portions thereof highlighted or otherwise indicated as selected in a sequential fashion, as if the wheel 140 were rotating. The outcome of the spin may be determined by stopping the moving "highlighting" effect on a single portion of the wheel 140.

5 In one or more embodiments of the invention, a "win all" indicia 44,144 may be displayed only after a player has filled all of the other locations of the reel 40/wheel 140 with indicia 42,142. For example, with reference to Figure 4 where the bonus reel 140 includes eight (8) positions, a win all indicia 144 and the associated aggregate award may be automatically displayed when the player fills each of the other seven (7) spaces on the wheel 140 with an associated indicia 142/amount by play of the main game reels 122.

10 In one or more embodiments, after a player has received a predetermined winning combination on the main game reels 22,122, the one or more indicia comprising that winning combination may be removed from the main game reels 22,122 until a new game is initiated. In this embodiment, the payout associated with a particular combination may be increased, and so may be the amount associated with the bonus reel 40,140 which may be won by spinning the
15 bonus reel.

Various other embodiments of the invention will be described with reference to Figure 5. In this embodiment, a device 220 is provided which is similar to the devices 20,120 described above, the device 220 again including multiple main game reels 222. The main game reels 222 are arranged to display one or more indicia 224. A pay line 225 is provided for
20 determining which displayed indicia 224 comprise the outcome of the spin. A bonus reel is provided in the form of a bonus board 240.

In a preferred embodiment, the board 240 is capable of displaying a plurality of indicia 242. In one embodiment, the board 240 comprises a video display capable of displaying indicia 242 in a grid-type format, the grid defining spaces or locations for the display of indicia. In a
25 preferred embodiment, indicia 224 from the main game reels 222 are associated with the bonus board 242 when predetermined criteria are met. For example, upon receiving a predetermined winning combination, one or more of the indicia 224 may be associated with the board 240.

In accordance with one embodiment of the invention, a player is the winner of a bonus event if the player receives one of one or more particular arrangements of indicia 242 on the
30 board 240. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, in the event a player receives six of a particular indicia 242 along a row, column or a diagonal, then that player may be declared the winner of the bonus event. The player may be paid winnings based on a predetermined payout schedule. The player may also be paid winnings based on the aggregate value of the winning

indicia 242, where the values of the indicia 242 are associated with the board from the main game.

In one embodiment, the spaces or locations of the board 240 may initially be empty or void, and then the indicia 242 displayed therein. In another embodiment, each space or location
5 of the board 240 may be filled in, as with a black cover, and the cover "removed" to reveal the indicia 242. Those of skill in the art will appreciate the numerous ways by which the indicia 242 may be associated with the board 240 for use in the bonus event of the game.

In one embodiment of the game, the bonus board 240 is initially randomly and completely filled with indicia 242. When a player wins the main game, an indicia 242 associated
10 with the bonus board 240 may be highlighted or removed. Alternatively, the player may select a particular indicia 242 to highlight or remove. Again, the player may be declared the winner of the bonus event by obtaining a particular arrangement of indicia 242 (or a lack thereof) on the board. For example, the player may be declared the winner by eliminating all indicia 242 from the board 240 and/or by eliminating a particular row, column or diagonal of indicia. The player
15 may be declared a winner for filling the board 240 with indicia 242 or removing all indicia 242 from the board.

By way of example to the embodiment illustrated in Figure 5, the player has received three "7's" on the main game. In one embodiment, this combination may entitle the player to associate a "7" indicia 242 with the bonus board 240. In one embodiment, the player is allowed
20 to select (if more than one "7" indicia is present) a particular "7" indicia associated with the board 240 to highlight. In the illustrated embodiment, the player has selected the "7" indicia 242 in the upper right-hand corner of the board 240.

In one embodiment, one or more of the spaces or locations of the board 240 may be rendered "unplayable" for one or more games, in similar fashion to a crossword puzzle. A
25 player may then attempt to fill the other locations with indicia 242 or remove indicia 242 from the other locations, as the case may be.

It will be understood that the above described arrangements of apparatus and the method therefrom are merely illustrative of applications of the principles of this invention and many other embodiments and modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope
30 of the invention as defined in the claims.

CLAIMS OF THE INVENTION

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of playing a game comprising the steps of:
playing a main game with a plurality of indicia;
5 selecting a designated indicia from one or more of said plurality of indicia;
determining if the outcome of said main game is a winning outcome;
associating an indicia with a bonus event in the event the outcome of said main game is
a winning outcome;
playing said bonus event;
10 determining if the outcome of the bonus event includes said designated indicia, and if so,
paying a bonus amount.
2. The method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said main game comprises a
slot-type game having multiple reels with indicia printed thereon, and including the steps of
spinning said reels and determining if the indicia displayed after a spin comprise a predetermined
15 winning combination.
3. The method in accordance with Claim 1 including the step of associating said
designated indicia with said bonus event if said outcome of said main game comprises a
predetermined winning outcome.
4. The method in accordance with Claim 1 including the step of paying a bonus
20 amount if an outcome of said bonus event is associated with an indicia other than said designated
indicia.
5. The method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein each indicia associated with said
bonus event other than said designated indicia has an associated value and wherein said bonus
amount comprises a sum of all amounts associated with said bonus event.
- 25 6. A method of playing a game comprising the steps of:
playing a main game with a plurality of indicia;
determining if the outcome of said main game is a winning outcome;
associating an indicia with a bonus event in the event the outcome of said main game is
a winning outcome;
30 removing said indicia associated with said bonus event from said main game;
playing said bonus event; and
determining if the outcome of the bonus event comprises a winning event, and if so,
paying a bonus amount.

7. The method in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said main game comprises a slot-type game having multiple reels with indicia printed thereon, and including the steps of spinning said reels and determining if the indicia displayed after a spin comprise a predetermined winning combination.

5 8. The method in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said bonus event comprises the random selection of an indicia associated with said bonus event, and wherein a bonus winning is associated with one or more of said indicia associated with said main game.

9. The method in accordance with Claim 8 including the step of increasing a value associated with indicia associated with said bonus event as indicia are removed from said main
10 game.

10. A method of playing a game comprising the steps of:
placing a wager;
assigning a portion of said wager to a bonus event jackpot;
playing a main game with a plurality of indicia;
15 determining if the outcome of said main game is a winning outcome;
associating an indicia with a bonus event in the event the outcome of said main game is a winning outcome;
playing said bonus event; and
determining if the outcome of the bonus event comprises a winning event, and if so,
20 paying at least a portion of said jackpot.

11. The method in accordance with Claim 10 including the step of associating a value with each outcome of said bonus event and paying a greater of said portion of said jackpot or said value if the outcome of the bonus event comprises a winning event.

12. The method in accordance with Claim 10 including the step of associating a value
25 with each outcome of said bonus event, at least one value comprising a sum of all other values, and paying a greater of said portion of said jackpot or said value if the outcome of the bonus event comprises a winning event.

13. A gaming apparatus comprising:
a plurality of first reels for displaying indicia;
30 a spin input mechanism arranged to spin said plurality of first reels;
a payout device arranged to pay a winning amount in the event indicia displayed by said plurality of first reels after a spin comprise a predetermined winning combination of indicia;

at least one bonus device adapted to display an indicia associated with a winning combination of indicia resulting from a spin of said plurality of first reels; and

a payout device arranged to pay a bonus amount if the outcome of play of the bonus device is a winning outcome.

5 14. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 13 wherein there are three first reels and said bonus device comprises at least one bonus reel.

 15. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 13 wherein said bonus device comprises a wheel.

 16. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 13 wherein said bonus device comprises
10 a bonus board.

 17. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 13 including a selector for selecting a designated indicia.

 18. A method of playing a game comprising the steps of:
 placing a wager;
15 playing a main game;
 determining if the outcome of said main game is a winning outcome;
 paying a winning amount if the outcome of the main game is a winning outcome;
 associating said winning amount with a bonus event;
 playing said bonus event;
20 determining if the outcome of the bonus event is a winning outcome; and
 paying a bonus amount if the outcome of the bonus event is a winning outcome.

 19. The method in accordance with Claim 18 wherein said main game comprises a slot-type game having multiple reels with indicia printed thereon, and including the steps of spinning said reels and determining if the indicia displayed after a spin comprise a predetermined
25 winning combination.

 20. The method in accordance with Claim 18 wherein said step of associating said winning amount with a bonus event comprises displaying the winning amount on a reel.

 21. The method in accordance with Claim 18 wherein said step of playing said bonus event comprises spinning a reel displaying said winning amounts.

30 22. The method in accordance with Claim 18 wherein said step of paying a bonus amount comprises paying an amount associated with one or more winning amounts from the main game associated with the bonus event.

 23. A method of playing a game comprising the steps of:

placing a wager;

spinning a plurality of first reels having indicia thereon;

determining if indicia displayed by said plurality of first reels and associated with a first pay line comprises a predetermined winning combination if indicia having a first award
5 associated therewith;

paying the first award if said displayed indicia comprise a predetermined winning combination;

associating said first award with at least one bonus reel when a winning combination is received by spinning said first reels;

10 spinning said at least one bonus reel; and

determining if an award associated with said at least one bonus reel is associated with a second pay line, and if so, paying a bonus award.

24. The method in accordance with Claim 23 wherein said step of associating said first award comprises displaying said first award on a bonus reel.

15 25. The method in accordance with Claim 23 wherein said bonus award comprises the amount of the award associated with the second pay line.

26. The method in accordance with Claim 23 wherein said bonus award comprises the sum of all awards associated with the at least one bonus reel.

20 27. The method in accordance with Claim 23 wherein said at least one bonus reel has a number of award positions, and wherein said step of associating said first award includes the step of determining if all of said award positions are filled.

28. The method in accordance with Claim 27 including the step of not associating said first award with said at least one bonus if all of said award positions are filled.

25 29. The method in accordance with Claim 27 including the step of determining if said first award is larger than any previous award associated with said at least one bonus reel, and if so, replacing said first award with a previously associated award, in the event all award positions are filled.

30 30. The method in accordance with Claim 23 including the step of disassociating said first awards from said at least one bonus reel after said step of determining whether an award associated with said at least one bonus reel is associated with a second pay line.

31. A gaming apparatus comprising:

a plurality of first reels for displaying indicia;

a spin input mechanism arranged to spin said plurality of first reels;

a payout device arranged to pay a winning amount in the event indicia displayed by said plurality of first reels after a spin comprise a predetermined winning combination of indicia;

at least one bonus reel adapted to display winning amounts resulting from a spin of said plurality of first reels;

5 a spin input mechanism arranged to spin said at least one bonus reel; and

a payout device arranged to pay a bonus amount in if the outcome of the spin of the bonus reel is a winning outcome.

32. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 31 wherein there are three first reels and a single bonus reel.

10 33. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 32 wherein one or more of said reels comprises mechanical reels.

34. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 32 wherein one or more of said reels comprise images displayed by a display.

15 35. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 31 including a display and means for changing language of information displayed by said display dependent upon language information provided by a player.

36. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 35 wherein said language information comprises a code associated with a card provided by a player.

20 37. The apparatus in accordance with Claim 31 including an identifier for identifying a language in which information is to be displayed by said apparatus.

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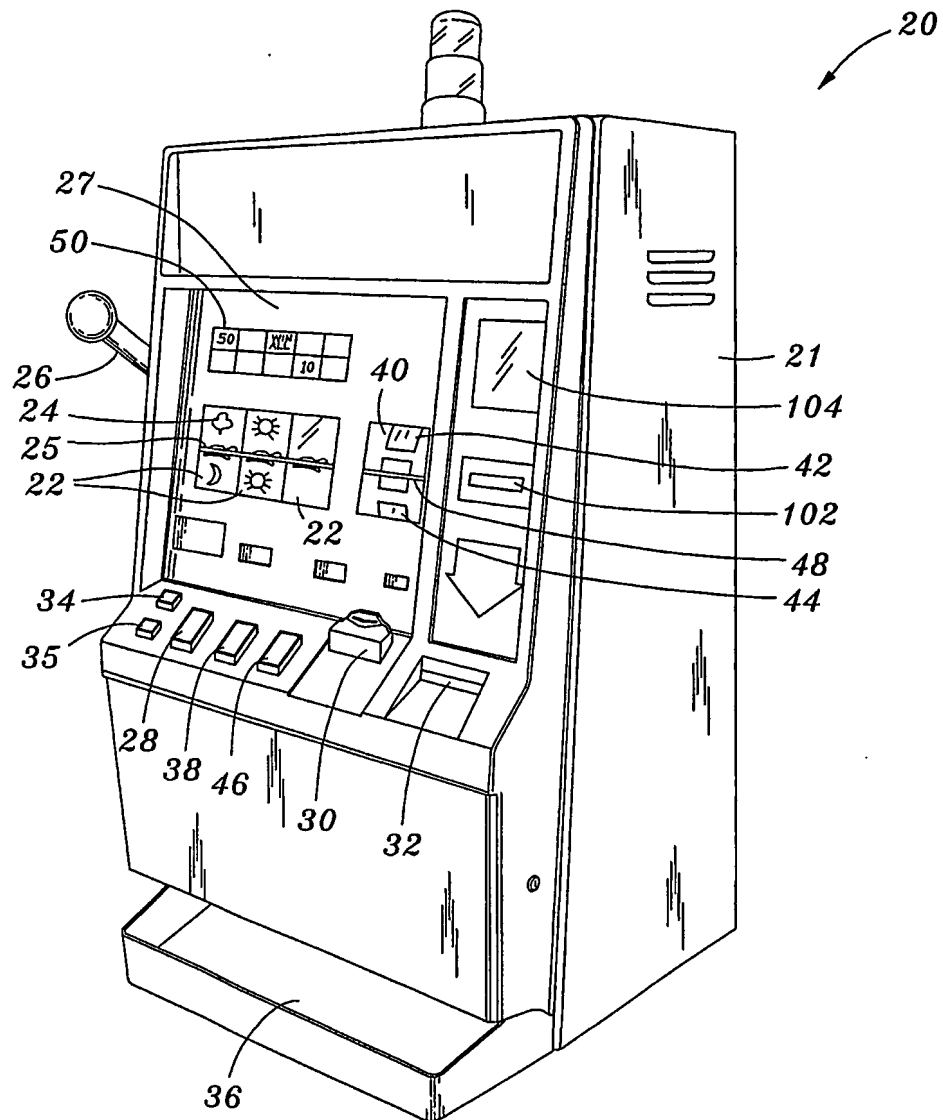


Fig. 1

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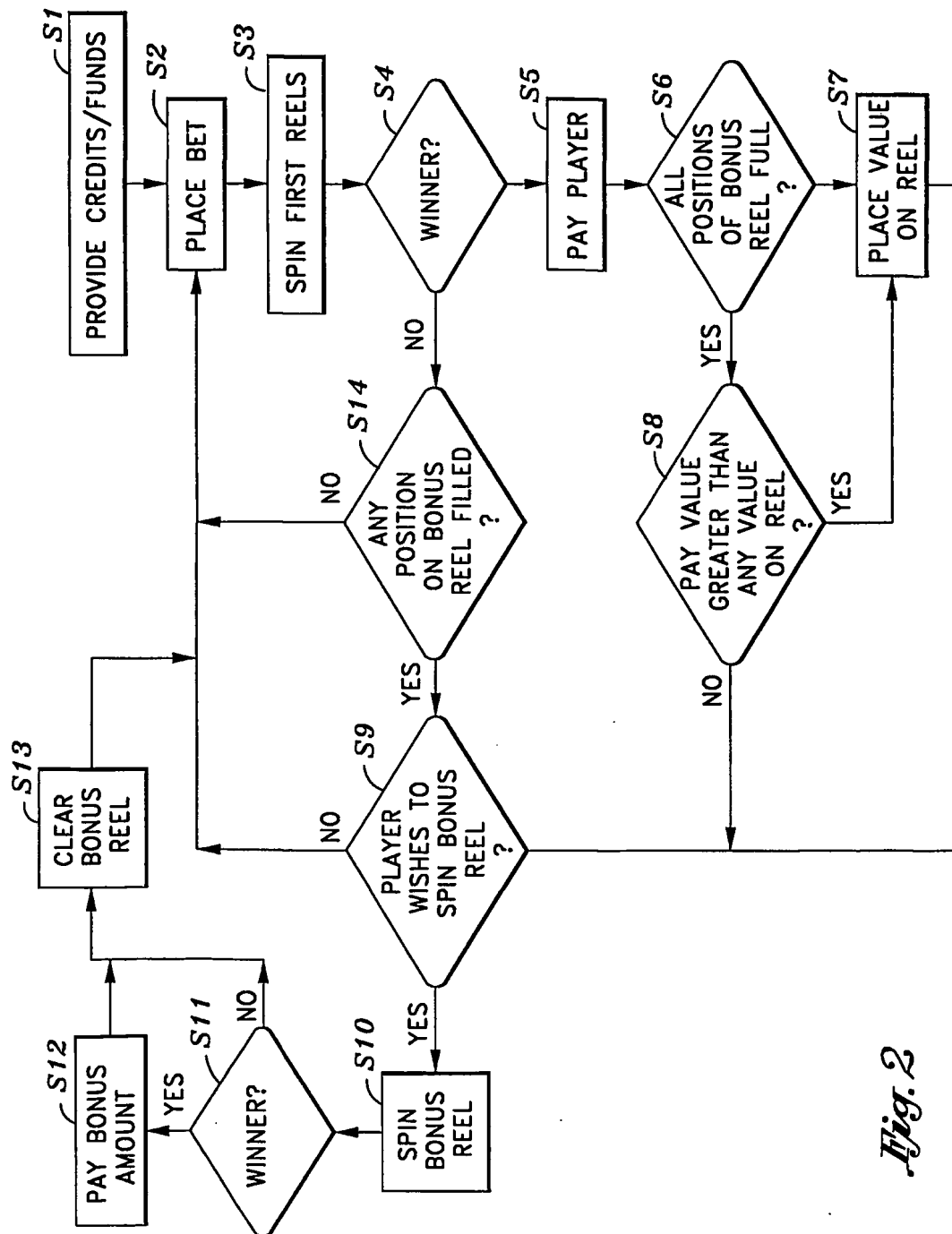
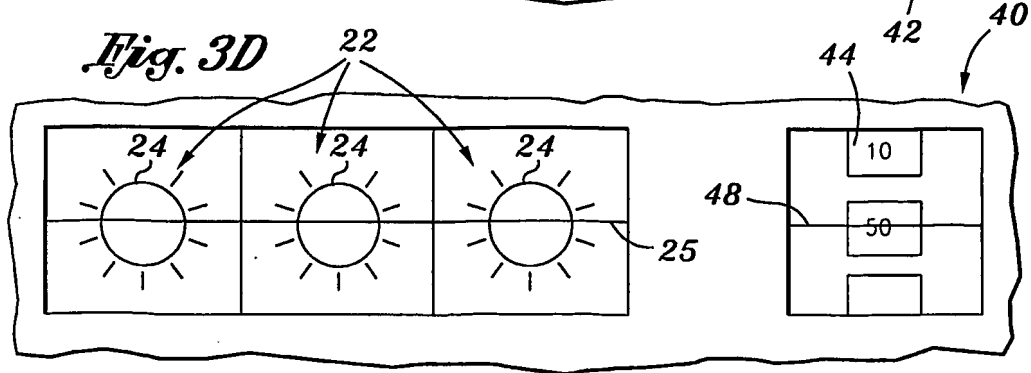
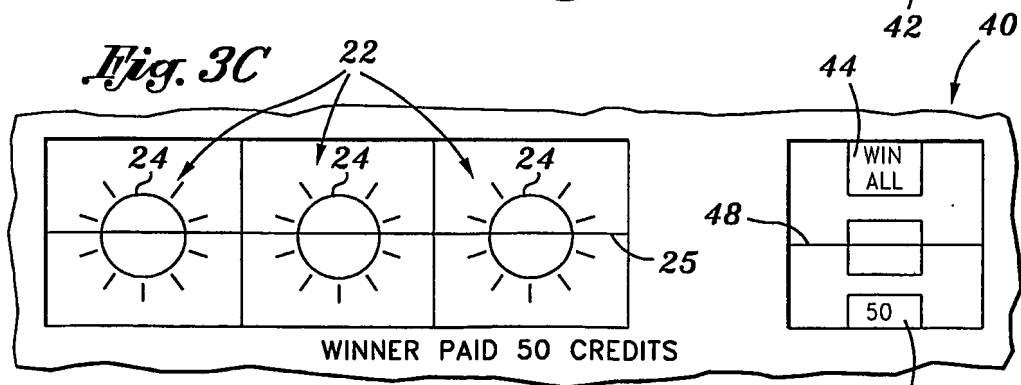
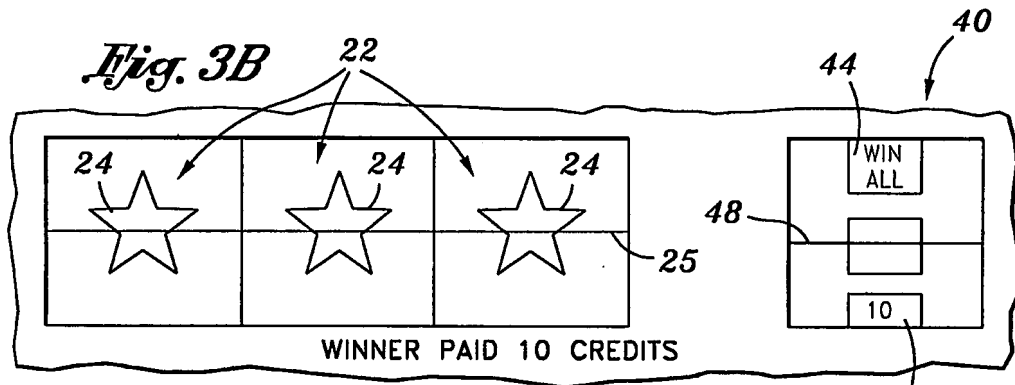
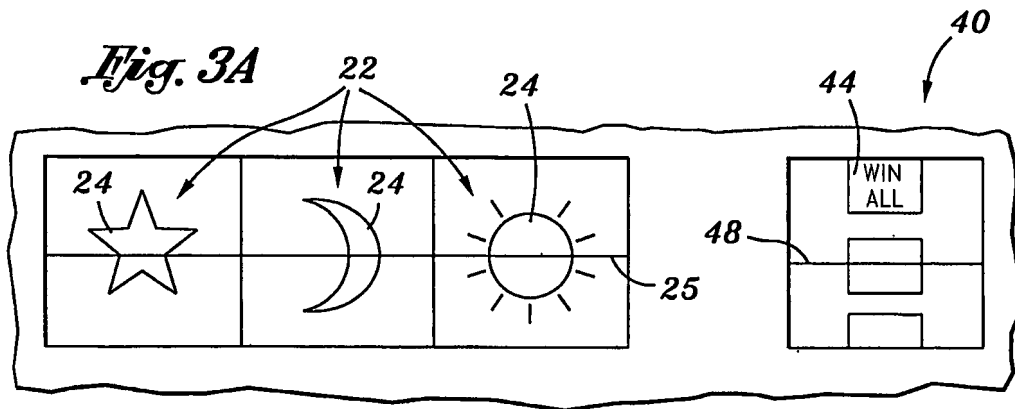


Fig. 2

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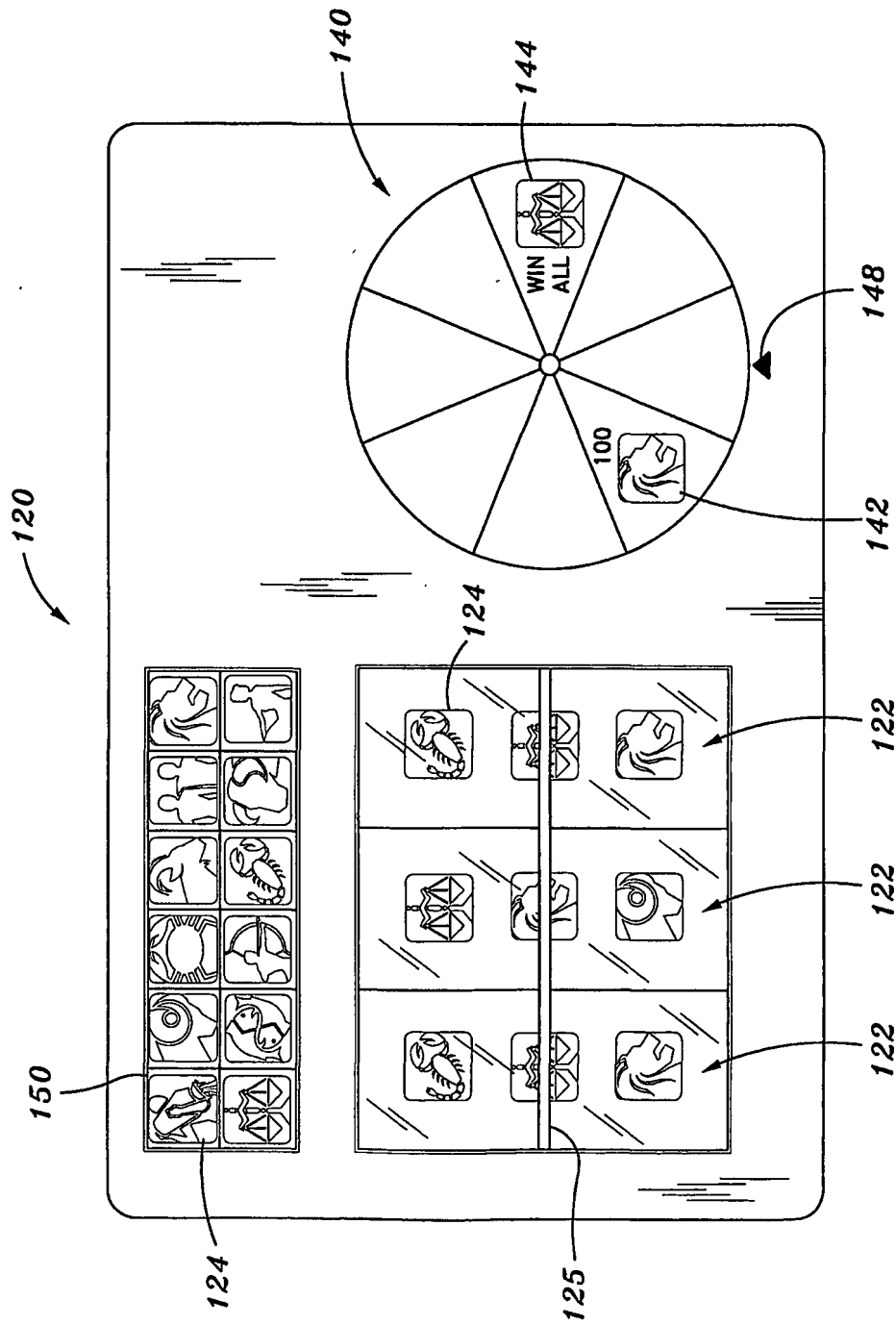


Fig. 4

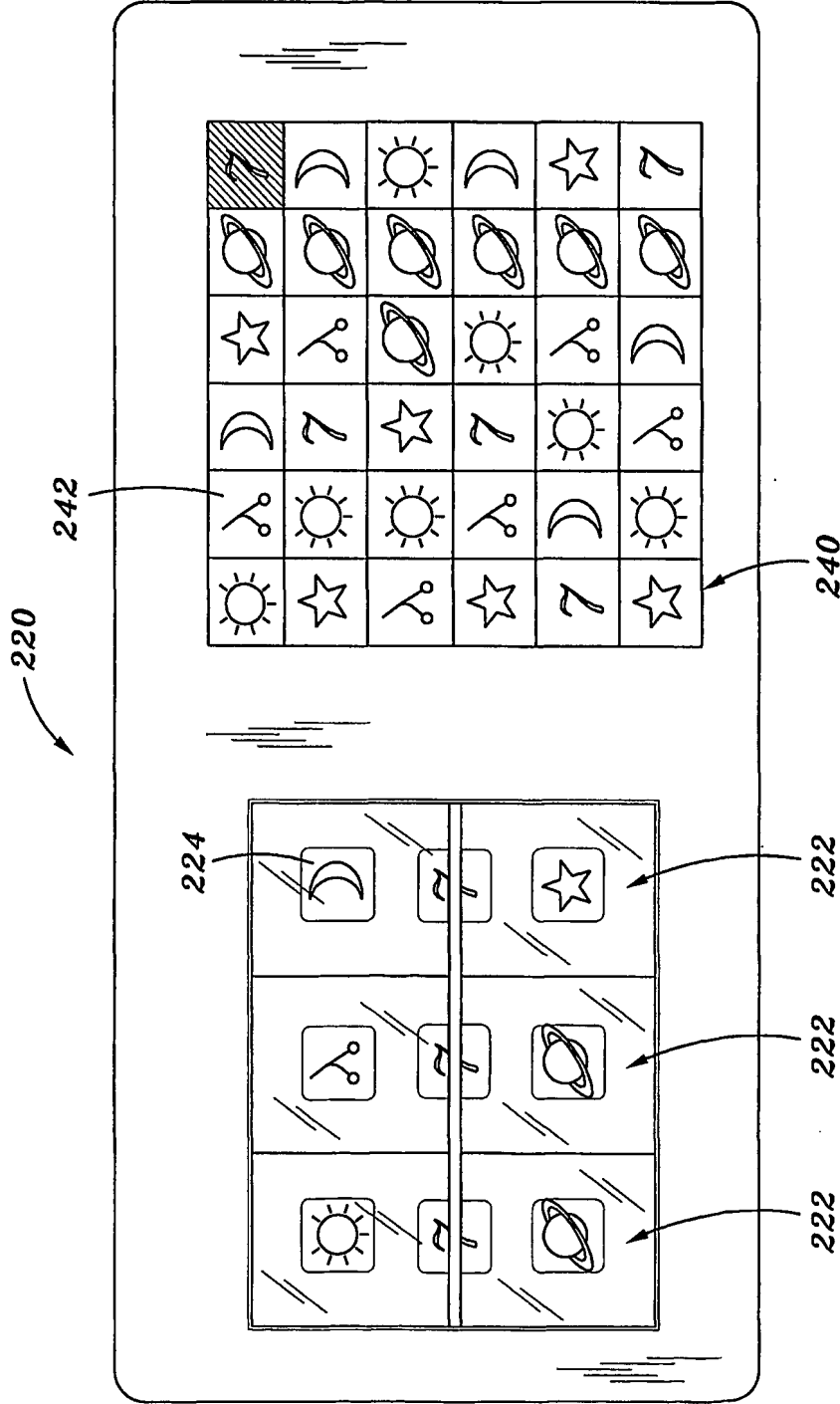


Fig. 5

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US00/28080

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC(7) : A63F 13/00 US CL : 463/17, 20 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) U.S. : 463/17, 20; 273/143R; 434/161, 176, 157 Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5,823,874 A (<i>ADAMS</i>) 20 October 1998	13-15, 18-26, 29, 31-34
X	US 4,836,546 A (<i>DiRe et al.</i>) 06 June 1989	1-12, 16-17
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* "A"	Special categories of cited documents: document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"E"	earlier document published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"L"	document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"O"	document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family
"P"	document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	
Date of the actual completion of the international search 07 DECEMBER 2000		Date of mailing of the international search report 16 JAN 2001
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230		Authorized officer DOLORES COLLINS Telephone No. (703) 308-8352

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US00/28080

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This international report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. ☒ Claims Nos.: 27 & 28
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

The recitation of awards positions being filled or not is not clearly explained and/or comprehended.

3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.